

## PROBLEM RESOLUTION

### 1. Misrouted Invoices (Bills from Vendors).

- a. Invoices are bills from vendors that are typically received for purchase order procurements on a CG-5398 (or OF-347 or SF 1449) - Order for Supplies or Services. In order to pay a vendor for goods and services, FINCEN must have an obligation document copy of CG-5398 (or OF-347 or SF 1449), an invoice from the vendor, and a receiving report from the target unit in most cases.
- b. Vendors must send their invoices directly to the FINCEN. This has certain legal implications under the Prompt Payment Act. The time period in which the Coast Guard must pay its bills before incurring interest penalties begins upon proper presentation of an invoice.
- c. Occasionally, vendors misroute invoices and send them to the unit. Units should return these invoices to the vendor for correct submission to FINCEN. **DO NOT FORWARD TO THE FINCEN.** Returned invoices must include the sample letter included in this chapter. (See Figure 7-1).
- d. SF-44's only require an invoice for payment when there is no seller's signature. If the unit receives an SF-44 invoice and there is a seller's signature on the SF-44, the invoice should be retained locally. **DO NOT FORWARD THESE INVOICES TO THE FINCEN.**
- e. BPA's require a summary invoice for all calls or activity over the period specified in the contract. (CGDF BPA's are an exception. See Chapter 12, Section D, Dining Facility for more information). The vendor sends these summary invoices directly to the FINCEN. If misrouted to the unit, return summary invoice to the vendor with the letter in Figure 7-1.
- f. Before you return an invoice you should check to see if it specifically states that it is the unit's copy. Also check to see if the FINCEN's address is the primary mailing address. Your copy should be filed for use in case of an inquiry. **DO NOT FORWARD IT TO THE FINCEN.**

## 1. f. (cont'd)

CG Unit Address:  
Phone:  
Date:

Vendor:  
Address:

Gentlemen:

The enclosed invoice must be directed to the following address:

For address see Chapter 12, Section A, Bill to Address.

An invoice sent to any other address is an improper invoice under the terms of the Prompt Payment Act. Please ensure your billing files are changed to reflect this address for all future invoices. Remember to include the Coast Guard assigned purchase order numbers (block 3 or 4) on your invoices.

Sincerely,

Title:

### Figure 7-1 Sample Letter - Vendor Misrouted Invoices

#### 2. Vendor Inquiries.

- a. Vendors are constantly concerned about collecting for goods and services they have provided. Their concern is understandable and reasonable. Please treat their concerns with respect.
- b. Address vendor inquiries directly to **FINCEN**. It is the only place that can give a complete answer on all issues concerning vendor payment. **The FINCEN has 3 sources available to answer payment inquiries:**
  - **1-800-564-5504:** Automatic Voice Response available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.
  - **757-523-6940:** Customer Service Representatives available weekdays from 8:00AM to 5:00PM EDT or leave a Voice Mail message 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.
  - **E-Mail Address:** [cscall@fincen.uscg.mil](mailto:cscall@fincen.uscg.mil)
- c. Vendors frequently call the unit to request payment information. Units should follow these procedures for dealing with vendor inquiries:
  - (1) Check local procurement file to determine the following:
    - (a) Has a purchase order been prepared?
    - (b) Have the goods been received?

## c. (1) (cont'd)

## (c) Has a receiving report been sent?

Note: Properly signed SF-44's are receiving reports. Call record sheets for BPA's are receiving reports.

2. c (2) If the answer is YES to all three questions, refer the vendor to the FINCEN Customer Service, (757) 523-6940. Automated Voice Response 1-800-564-5504 or E-Mail [cscall@fincen.uscg.mil](mailto:cscall@fincen.uscg.mil).

(3) If the answer is NO to any of the three questions politely explain the problem and take appropriate local action.

(4) A unit should never make commitments or promises to the vendor as to when payment will be made.

- d. **Payment Advice Internet Delivery (PAID)** is a system developed by the U. S. Department of the Treasury's Financial Management Service to provide participating Federal agencies a method of making remittance information available to their vendors through the Internet. The system is currently available to commercial vendors. Vendors must provide the Coast Guard Finance Center with their Taxpayer Identification Number (**TIN**) in order to participate in this program. The TIN is sent to Treasury and becomes a part of the payment file. **PAID** Registration is accomplished with the use of the **TIN** also.

- To access **PAID**, vendors must register for **PAID** on-line via the Internet completing the on-line registration form and choosing the delivery method for notification of remittance data.
- A vendor is only required to register one time for each Taxpayer Identification Number (**TIN**) to access remittance data from all participating agencies.
- After receiving the registration acceptance notice, the vendor can log into **PAID** and query on-line for payments by either date, date range, invoice number, or any combination thereof. Displayed data fields are limited to paying agency, date of payment, payment amount, invoice number and other remittance information provided by the agency in the addendum record.
- Data is available within 24 hours of the date of the payment and retained for two months from the date of payment. The Internet address for the **PAID** site is: <http://arfc.fms.treas.gov>.

**3. Lost Document/LUFS Transmittal Problems.**

- a. It is possible that some transmittals will be lost in the mail. Two symptoms help determine this problem:
  - (1) The transactions will not show up on the unit's PES Report.
  - (2) Messages will be received from the FINCEN requesting missing obligation and/or Receiving Report transactions.
- b. If you suspect a transmittal has been lost, contact the FINCEN LUFS Hotline, (757) 523-6781. Explain you suspect a lost transmittal. Ask if other documents that were in the transmittal were entered in the accounting records. If they are not in the accounting records make copies of the documents and send them to the FINCEN as a new transmittal.
- c. LUFS units will receive a weekly transmission report. Compare the LUFS XFER Date/Time Report with the weekly transmission report to ensure all batches were processed by FINCEN.

**4. Missing Obligations.**

- a. This problem arises when the FINCEN has a vendor invoice but no valid obligation document. An obligation document is usually a call sheet for a BPA or an obligation copy of a purchase order.
- b. The FINCEN will send a message via electronic mail (after units are site-certified for LUFS), letter, or record message directly to the unit with a list of purchase orders that require obligation before vendor payment can be made. The message will request one of the following actions:
  - (1) Certified LUFS units: Transmit PO information to FINCEN immediately. If prior purchase order transmittals have been made please contact the LUFS hotline at (757) 523-6781.
  - (2) Non LUFS units: Forward missing PO obligations to FINCEN by faxing copies to (757) 523-6900 Attn: OPC, or by sending obligation copies via express mail to FINCEN staff symbol (OPC). If PO obligations have already been sent, call Customer Service for further information (757) 523-6940.
- c. You can confirm if the rest of the documents transmitted with the missing document were received by the FINCEN by using the procedure outlined in paragraph 3 above.

**5. Missing Receiving Report.**

- a. This problem occurs when the FINCEN has an obligation document from the unit and a Vendor's invoice, but does not have the unit's receiving report. Payment cannot be processed until the unit submits a receiving report for the goods or services that have been provided.
- b. The FINCEN will send an electronic mail message, letter, or record message directly to the unit requesting the status of the order. Unit status reply should be as follows:
  - (1) Goods not received.
  - (2) A partial receipt of goods (include line items received, dollar amounts and date received).
  - (3) Full receipt of goods (include dollar amount and date received).
- c. To speed payment to the vendor, take one of these actions even if you previously indicated receipt.
  - (1) Certified LUFS units: If goods have been received, transmit receiving report information to FINCEN immediately. If receipts have already been transmitted, contact the LUFS hotline at (757) 523-6781.
  - (2) Non LUFS units: If goods have been received, submit receiving reports via E-mail to "RECEIPTS/FINCEN" or via MSG record traffic outlined in Chapter 2. If receipts have already been sent, call (757) 523-6933.

**6. Recurring Charge Master Report Inquiries.** For recurring Charge Master inquiries, forward e-mail to "Customer Service" or [customerservice@fincen.uscg.mil](mailto:customerservice@fincen.uscg.mil). If it is necessary to call FINCEN, call Customer Service, (757) 523-6940 and a Customer Service Representative will direct your call to the appropriate Accounts Payable Representative responsible for your accounts.

**7. PES Report Reconciliation Problems.** See Chapter 6.